



NEWS

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ANNUAL TRAINING UNDERWAY FOR GAS STATION OWNERS, SERVICE TECHNICANS

SPRINGFIELD IL – At the Illinois Department of Agriculture, our mission is to be an advocate for Illinois' agricultural industry and provide the necessary regulatory functions to benefit our natural resources, the agriculture industry and our consumers.

The Bureau of Weights and Measures serves as a valuable consumer and commercial protection function within the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Bureau staff works tirelessly to ensure equity in the marketplace by certifying all scales used for commerce in the state of Illinois and ensuring the quality of fuels offered for sale in our state.

Each year the Bureau hosts an annual conference for gas station owners and registered service technicians in order to provide required testing, licensing and training. The conference also serves as an opportunity for industry professionals to learn from one another about best practices and techniques.

The purpose of this conference is to discuss service reports, uniform enforcement of the National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) standards, Illinois regulations, and discuss future plans. Tuesday's session featured serviceperson testing while Wednesday's session will focus more on motor fuel dispensers and fuel quantity and quality.

"This conference is not mandatory, but we highly encourage participation from our gas station owners and service technicians," said Doug Rathbun of the Bureau of Weights and Measures. "Here at the Department of Agriculture, we serve both the consumer and the business. Our sole goal as a Bureau is to make sure all these devices (gas pumps and scales) are accurate. That ensures the customer gets what they pay for, but also ensures the business gets a fair price for their efforts as well."

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One of the items likely to be discussed at this week's conference is skimmers devices. These devices are fraudulently installed by criminals looking to steal credit or debit card information. While more likely to be found on an ATM, these illegal devices have been found throughout the nation on gas pumps. So far in 2016, five of these devices have been found on gas pumps in Illinois. Skimmers can have a negative effect not only on the consumer, but on business at the establishment where the device is found. Knowing about these devices, how to spot them and how to report them, is the best defense for gas station owners and their customers in Illinois.

If a consumer suspects the presence of a skimmer device, they should contact the gas station attendant immediately. The pump will be bagged, or removed from service, by the establishment until a registered service technician or Department inspector can review the machine. If a skimmer device is confirmed, local law enforcement will be called to begin a criminal investigation.

Inspecting machines for skimmer devices is part of the Bureau's inspection process. The Bureau performs regular, unannounced inspections of all commercially used weighing and measuring devices in the state. The Bureau performs approximately 140,000 inspections a year, throughout the state of Illinois. Annual inspections are mandatory under the Weights and Measures Act.

Overall consumer awareness can help protect you and others from fraudulent activity. To learn more about the functions of the Illinois Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Weights and Measures, you can check out the following website: <https://www.agr.state.il.us/weights-measures-program>.

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